



THE NEXT
TIME I
RECEIVED
CONTACT
FROM HER

WAS A
MONTH
AND A
WEEK
FROM
THAT
DAY.



"DO YOU HAVE TIME TONIGHT?"

...WITH JUST
THAT COLD,
EMOTION-
LESS TEXT,

MY EXPECT-
TATIONS AND
DESPAIR
WERE SET
IN STONE...

"YEAH, I SHOULD BE FINE AFTER 6.
IS THAT OKAY WITH YOU?"

...AND
THINKING
THAT,

I TRIED MY
HARDEST TO
COMPOSE A
TEXT MESSAGE
IN REPLY.

...AND A HORRIBLE FEELING BEGAN CREEPING UP ON ME.

WE WALKED FOR 20 MINUTES WITHOUT SAYING A WORD

WHAT YOU'RE UP TO...

AS USUAL, I DON'T KNOW...

じんわり...

[CHAPTER 12]

FINALLY THE NIGHT ENDS, AND THEN

Chapitre 11 : Le nuit finira bien par passer...

DOES SHE NOT HAVE MONEY?
IS SHE HOPING THAT I'LL TREAT HER, SO SHE'S AVOIDING THE EXPENSIVE SHOPS?

OR DOES SHE NOT WANT TO SEEM...

...TOO PUSHY?

...THIS ONE'S NO GOOD, EITHER.

Why

...AHH.

"RIGHT NOW WE'RE HAVING A HUGE SALE ON GYU-DON!!"

...YEAH.

...THAT'S PROBABLY WHY.

OH! LOOK, THAT CAKE SHOP'S OPEN, WE COULD...

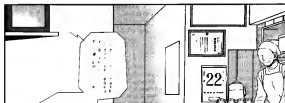
UM... WE DON'T HAVE TO GO FOR FAST FOOD, YOU KNOW...

FLAT OUT

...OH,

...NO.

SOMEHOW



...WE
WALKED
ANOTHER
TEN MIN-
UTES,

AND
EVENTUALLY,
ENDED UP
AT A RAMEN
SHOP A FAIR
DISTANCE
AWAY FROM
THE TRAIN
STATION.

...BUT

BACK IN MY DAY, I WAS A PITCHER ON OUR COMMUNITY TEAM!

AH...
YEAH,
HUH...

MAN, THAT WAS A GREAT PITCH JUST NOW.

AL-RIGHT!

UM...
PUT THE ONION RAMEN HERE.

OH!
The manager looks mad!

OH...
REALLY...

That's great

THANK YOU FOR CREATING A MOMENT OF CALMNESS WITH YOUR RANDOM CONVERSATION, OLD MAN!!

Ah

OH!
THE INTERVIEW'S STARTING!!

OH, YEAH, I WAS REAL POPULAR BACK IN THE DAY, AND...

THERE ARE A LOT OF THINGS I WANT TO TELL HER TODAY...

...BUT,

...TO BE HONEST,

OH...
THANKS...

...HAI-KUN. HERE.













I KNEW
YOU WERE
BUYING IT
ALL FOR
ME...

EVEN
THOUGH YOU
WERE BARELY
GETTING BY ON
YOUR PART-TIME
JOB, HAI-KUN,

YOU STILL
BOUGHT ME
DONUTS...
AND CAKE...

Y...
YEAH?



W-



IS THAT
REALLY
IT?!

I WAS
REALLY
THANKFUL
THAT YOU
BOUGHT IT
FOR ME,

WAIT
A SEC.

AND
HAPPY,
TOO,

I JUST
WANT YOU
TO BELIEVE
THAT.

BUT...

...HUH?

wha-



I

I...

I REALLY

HATE
WESTERN
SWEETS...

.....

.....

...WHAT?





WHAT'S WITH THIS DISPLAY OF SWEETS?!

...WAIT, WHAT?!

I won't eat them!

* The strict senpai who complains a lot

SORRY, THEY'RE PRETTY SWEET.

IT'S A FULL SET, SO DON'T WORRY ABOUT LEAVING SOME BEHIND, OKAY?

OH, NO, IT'S GOOD, I'LL EAT IT ALL!



I LOVE THESE THINGS! ♡

WOAH... YOU GOT TONS OF RICE BALL CANDIES AND SWEET BEAN JELLY!

I'm not really good with sweet things

I'm so happy!

OHH THAT'S GREAT!

Oh, they've got red bean balls



Yeh! GIRLS REALLY DO LOVE TO EAT SWEETS, DON'T THEY!

...OH, ACTUALLY I--

HI EVERYONE!



I LOVE BAKING CAKES! ♡

OH...

WAIT, EBISAWA-SAN, DON'T TELL ME THAT YOU REALLY LOVE DESSERTS?

NO, I...

actually

OH

THAT'S GREAT!! ACTUALLY,!!

DROP



あははは 4-は

That's
Great!!

YEAH,
I REALLY
LOVE
SUGARY
THINGS!!

Well
what
ever

WHEN I
REALIZED
WHAT MY
LITTLE
WHITE
LIE HAD
DONE

...IT
WAS
ALREADY
TOO
LATE...



AHH...

YEAH...

AND I
COULDN'T
FIND THE
RIGHT TIME
TO TELL
THEM I'D
LIED...

IT WAS AN
UNDENIABLE
FACT THAT
EBISAWA-SAN
"LOVED SWEETS
MORE THAN LIFE
ITSELF"...

WHEN I
CAME TO
SCHOOL
HERE,



...TO
TELL
YOU.

But

I HAD
TRIED...

...I,

NOW
THAT I
THINK OF
IT, I DO
REMEM-
BER...

OH...



YOU
WERE ALWAYS
BUYING THOSE
RED BEAN DRINKS
FOR YOURSELF,
WEREN'T YOU.

AH...
THAT'S
RIGHT.



U-UMM,
COME ON,
YOU KNOW
WHY...

NO,
I DO IT
BECAUSE
I WANT
TO!

YOU
REALLY
DON'T
HAVE TO
FORCE
YOUR-
SELF...

IT COSTS
A LOT OF
MONEY,
DOESN'T
IT?

UMM...
BUT,



HAI-
KUN,
HAI-
KUN!

THANKS
FOR ALWAYS
BRINGING
THE CLUB
SWEETS!

AH-
SURE!









WHAT
ABOUT THE
LAYER CAKE
I GAVE YOU
AFTER THE
ACCIDENT?

DID IT MAKE
YOU FEEL
BETTER,
OR DID IT
JUST COM-
PLICATE
THINGS?

...I,

I TOOK
IT HOME...
AND ATE
IT.



...HOW WAS
I SUPPOSED
TO UNDER-
STAND THAT
BY SAYING
"DON'T FORCE
YOURSELF",
YOU DIDN'T
WANT ME TO
AT ALL?

WEREN'T
YOU
THE ONE
FORCING
ME TO
DO IT?

THAT'S
WHY I
SAID-

AHH...

SO
BASIC-
ALLY,

TO KEEP
ME FROM
BUYING YOU
THE STUFF
YOU HATED,
YOU STARTED
AVOIDING ME.

Y-
YES,
BUT...!

...EVEN
IF YOU
DIDN'T
LIKE IT,

...IT MADE
ME HAPPY
TO SEE YOU
HAPPY.

...I KNOW
THAT

IT WAS A
COWARDLY,
HORRIBLE
THING TO DO,
BUT...

...YEAH.

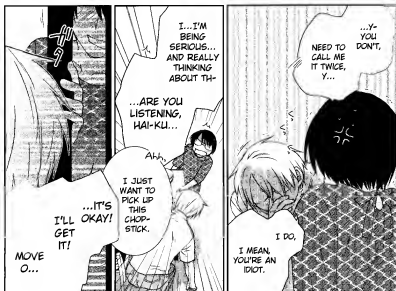
YOU
REALLY
HAD ME
FOOLED
THERE.

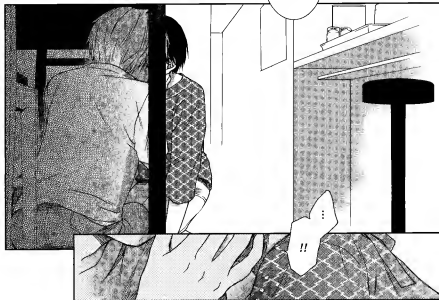
...I!

I'M
SORR...

...?

46
71







IT WAS LIKE I HAD CONFIDENCE





...HERE,
EBISAWA-
SAN.

YOUR
CHANGE.

...BUT
THAT'S
OKAY.



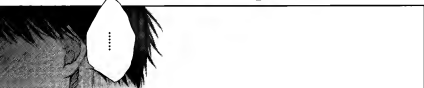
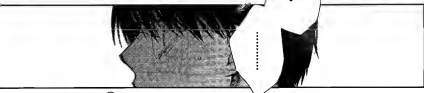
WILL
NEVER
BE A
DAY

WHEN
SOMEONE
FULLY
UNDER-
STANDS

Thank
you!

EXACTLY
WHAT THIS
WOMAN IS
DOING





WE
TURNED

AND BEGAN
TO WALK IN
THE DIRECTION
OPPOSITE OF
THE STATION.

...OH
YEAH,

REMEMBER
WHEN WE
PASSED THAT
PACHINKO PARLOR
BY THE STATION
EARLIER?

OH,
YEAH,
THAT?

All the
business-
men that
were
there

I HEARD ONE
OF THEM SAY,
"ALRIGHT!
GIVE IT YOUR
ALL, LIKE YOU
DID LAST YEAR!"

THEN I HEARD,
"BUT BOSS,
I'VE ALREADY
POWERED
DOWN..."

YEAH,
YEAH.

WE
WALKED
HAND IN
HAND

AS OUR
CONVER-
SATION
IDLED
AND
PAUSED



THERE'S
SO MUCH
THAT I
JUST CAN'T
PUT INTO
WORDS

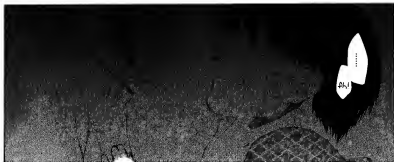
...BUT

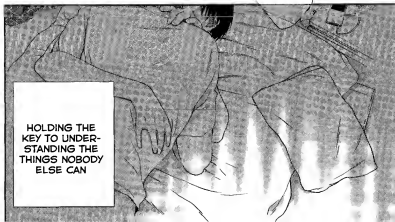
MN!



THERE ARE
THINGS
I WANT
TO SAY

THERE ARE
THINGS
I WANT
TO ASK







I CAN'T
TAKE MY
EYES OFF
HER FOR A
SECOND

I CAN'T
CALM
MYSELF
DOWN



I STILL
DON'T
UNDER-
STAND
THIS
WOMAN



...NO,
AH!

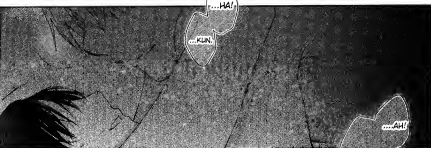
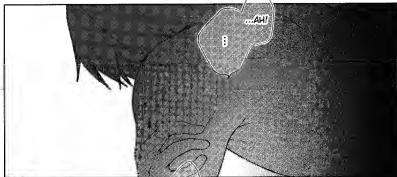
MN...

...YOU'RE
ADOR-
ABLE...

SHE'S
NOT THE
KIND OF
PERSON

WHO
REVEALS
ALL HER
SECRETS
AFTER
DOING
SOMETHING
LIKE THIS







...HAI-KUN!

...RIGHT NOW, I CAN'T EVEN BRING MYSELF

AH!

...

...NN!

TO PULL AWAY FROM HER

..YOU!

I LOVE YOU...!

...I KNOW THAT I WON'T BE ABLE TO LET HER GO

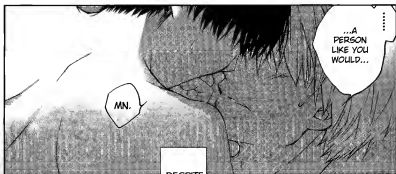
BUT...
WELL,
ABOUT
THAT,

I KNOW
THAT THESE
BOUNDLESS
EMOTIONS
WON'T
AMOUNT
TO ANY-
THING,
BUT...









....
...A
PERSON
LIKE YOU
WOULD...

MN.

DESPITE
THAT

I FEEL



THAT
WE'VE
GOTTEN
A LITTLE
CLOSER

BUT,
I...

JUST A
LITTLE
BIT IS
FINE
...JUST
A LITTLE
BIT.

AND I CAN
LEARN A
LITTLE BIT
ABOUT HER
EVERY DAY.

...

MN.

...

SLOWLY,
WITHOUT
RUSHING
ANYTHING

Gah!

WOOOW.

...MY
MUSCLES
ACHE...

WELL,
TIME
TO EAT,
I GUESS.



I'M
SORRY,
BUT

I HAVE A
GOOD IDEA
OF HOW MA-
SOCHISTIC
I AM.



SO...



...SO
I...

...YEAH.

...SO I
SAID

I DON'T CARE
ABOUT IT THAT
MUCH, OKAY?

EVEN IF,
AFTER WE
GET A LITTLE
CLOSER,

HA!
HA!
HA... YOU
DISAPPEAR
WITHOUT
SAYING
ANYTHING...

BUT

I WAS
STILL
NAIVE

IF YOU ASK
WHY, IT'S
BECAUSE
AT THAT
MOMENT

THAT
SHE WOULD
DISAPPEAR
FROM MY LIFE
FOR A MONTH
AFTER THAT.

I HADN'T
EVEN
IMAGINED